

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A bicycle hub comprising:
a hub axle having a first portion and a second portion releasably coupled to said first portion;
5 a hub body having an outer tubular portion and an interior passageway with said first portion of said hub axle being rotatably supported therein;
a sprocket support member releasably and non-rotatably coupled to said outer tubular portion of said hub body, said sprocket support member being mounted on said second portion of said hub axle; and
10 a spacer supported on said first portion of said hub axle adjacent a free end of said hub body, said spacer having a spacing portion and being configured to move in a transverse direction relative to said hub axle between a first position in which said spacing portion is located adjacent said hub axle and a second position in which said spacing portion is spaced from said hub axle without removing said first portion of
15 said hub axle from said hub body.
2. The bicycle hub according to claim 1, wherein
said spacer includes a release portion extending from said spacing portion, said spacing portion having an axial length larger than said release portion.
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3. The bicycle hub according to claim 2, wherein
said spacing portion and said release portion form an elongated slot with said first portion of said hub axle located therein, said slot being closed to allow movement of said spacer between said first and second positions without falling off said hub
25 axle.
- Sub 21 → 4. The bicycle hub according to claim 3, wherein
said axial length of said spacing portion is at least about twice as large as said axial length of said release portion such that an axial space is provided between said
30 spacer and a portion of a bicycle frame when said spacer is in said second position.

5. The bicycle hub according to claim 4, wherein
said outer tubular member is non-rotatably and releasably coupled to said
sprocket support member via an engagement section with an axial length smaller than
said axial space.

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6. The bicycle hub according to claim 3, wherein
said release portion is axially arranged on one side of said spacing portion.

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7. The bicycle hub according to claim 3, wherein
said spacer is formed as a one-piece, unitary member.

8. The bicycle hub according to claim 7, wherein
said spacer is formed of metal.

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9. The bicycle hub according to claim 3, wherein
said release portion is axially centered relative to said spacing portion.

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10. The bicycle hub according to claim 3, wherein
said release portion is formed of a cable loop fixedly coupled to said spacing
portion.

11. The bicycle hub according to claim 10, wherein
said spacer is formed of metal.

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12. The bicycle hub according to claim 3, wherein
said release portion includes a U-shaped member with its free ends forming a
part of said spacing portion, and said spacing portion further includes a pair of
spacing elements fixedly coupled to said free ends of said U-shaped member.

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13. The bicycle hub according to claim 12, wherein
said spacing elements at least partially contact each other.

14. The bicycle hub according to claim 12, wherein
said U-shaped member is formed of plastic and said spacing elements are
formed of metal.

5 15. The bicycle hub according to claim 3, wherein
said spacer includes tubular element forming said elongated slot and a spacing
element coupled to said tubular element, said spacing element and a part of said
tubular element forming said spacing portion.

10 16. The bicycle hub according to claim 15, wherein
said spacing element has an open ended slot, a first enlarged section and a
second reduced section frictionally retained in said tubular element such that said
open ended slot forms part of said elongated slot.

15 17. The bicycle hub according to claim 16, wherein
said tubular element is formed of plastic and said spacing element is formed of
metal.

20 18. The bicycle hub according to claim 1, wherein
said spacing portion includes an open ended slot formed therein.

19. The bicycle hub according to claim 18, wherein
said spacing portion is formed as a one-piece, unitary member.

25 20. The bicycle hub according to claim 18, wherein
said spacer includes a cable loop fixedly coupled to said spacing portion.

30 21. The bicycle hub according to claim 18, wherein
said spacing portion includes a tubular element frictionally retained thereon, a
part of said tubular element forming part of said spacing portion and another part of
said tubular element forming a release portion closing said open ended slot.

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22. The bicycle hub according to claim 18, wherein
said spacing portion includes a pair of spacing elements.

5 23. The bicycle hub according to claim 1, wherein
said outer tubular portion of said hub body includes an engagement member
non-rotatably coupled thereto.

10 24. The bicycle hub according to claim 23, wherein
said engagement member is releasably and non-rotatably coupled to said
sprocket support member.

15 25. The bicycle hub according to claim 23, wherein
said hub body includes a tubular inner sleeve portion with said first portion of
said hub axle rotatably arranged therein.

26. The bicycle hub according to claim 25, wherein
said inner sleeve portion is releasably and non-rotatably coupled to said
second portion of said hub axle.

20 27. The bicycle hub according to claim 1, wherein
said first portion of said hub axle includes a quick release mechanism mounted
on a free end of said first portion.

25 28. The bicycle hub according to claim 1, wherein
said sprocket support member includes a freewheel.

30 29. The bicycle hub according to claim 1, wherein
said first portion of said hub axle is threadedly coupled to said second portion
of said hub axle.